

What is claimed is:

[Claim 1] 1. An automotive interior component for a passenger cabin of a vehicle, comprising:

 a polymer body adapted to be attached to a portion of the passenger cabin; and

 an electroluminescent lamp integrally molded with said polymer body to define a unitary assembly.

[Claim 2] 2. An automotive interior component for a vehicle door, comprising:

 a door trim panel capable of being mounted to the vehicle door, said door trim panel including an opening;

 a bolster engaged with said door panel to conceal said opening; and

 an electroluminescent lamp mounted to said bolster, said electroluminescent lamp emitting visible light, when powered, that illuminates at least a portion of said door trim panel.

[Claim 3] 3. The automotive interior component of claim 2 wherein said bolster is removable from said trim panel to expose said opening.

[Claim 4] 4. The automotive interior component of claim 2 wherein said bolster and said electroluminescent lamp are integrally molded to define a unitary construction.

[Claim 5] 5. The automotive interior component of claim 2 further comprising:

 a covering attached to said bolster, said covering positioned relative to said electroluminescent lamp such that visible light emitted by said electroluminescent lamp is directed through said covering.

[Claim 6] 6. The automotive interior component of claim 5 wherein said covering includes a plurality of openings through which visible light from said electroluminescent lamp is transmitted.

[Claim 7] 7. The automotive interior component of claim 6 wherein said openings have a shape recognizable as a symbol by an occupant of the vehicle to which the vehicle door is attached.

[Claim 8] 8. The automotive interior component of claim 7 wherein said openings are arranged to form at least one alphanumeric character.

[Claim 9] 9. The automotive interior component of claim 5 wherein said covering is a solid layer configured for changing a color of the visible light emitted by said electroluminescent lamp.

[Claim 10] 10. A method of making an automotive interior component in a mold with mold sections that form a mold cavity with a geometrical shape resembling the automotive interior component and a gate for filling the mold cavity, comprising:

placing an electroluminescent lamp between the mold sections;

closing the mold sections and injecting a molten polymer resin through the gate to fill a portion of the mold cavity unfilled by the electroluminescent lamp; and

opening the mold sections after the molten polymer resin solidifies and ejecting the automotive interior component from the mold.

[Claim 11] 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

shaping the automotive interior component after ejection from the mold to define a final geometrical shape.

[Claim 12] 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the automotive interior component is a bolster for mounting to a door trim panel, and the geometrical shape of the mold cavity resembles the bolster.